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April 20, 2016

Honorable Anthony Foxx, Secretary of Transportation
U.S Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington DC, 20590

Dear Secretary Foxx:

On behalf of Parks & Trails New York, I am writing to support the Dutchess County and Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association (HVRTA) application to complete an eight-mile trail connection between the Village of Millerton and Under Mountain Road in the Town of Ancram, the tunnel crossing of State Route 22 at the intersection of State Route 22 and Orphan Farm Road (Copake Falls), and three pedestrian bridges to connect to the trail at Black Grocery Road in Copake.

Parks & Trails New York is the leading statewide parks and trails advocacy organization. For over 30 years, we've worked to develop a network of multi-use trails and greenways throughout the state. PTNY's vision is one in which all New Yorkers have close access to a multi-use trail that they can use for recreation and transportation. Regional rail trails such as the Harlem Valley are an integral part of this vision.

The three proposed project components will connect approximately 28 miles of continuous trail from Hillsdale (Columbia County) to Wassaic (Dutchess County), where a convenient link to New York City exists via the Metro North Railroad, expanding the trail's reach to millions of New Yorkers. Upon completion, the entire trail will be 46 miles in length.

This project brings public and private entities together - two counties, several state parks, and a non-for-profit trail association - in an effort that will result in a destination for thousands of people from near and far.

I am hopeful that you and the review committee will consider a grant for Dutchess County and the Harlem Valley Rail Trail Association to aid them in improving this important trail connection in eastern Dutchess and Columbia Counties.

Sincerely,

Robin Dropkin
Executive Director

